

REMARKS

Entry of this Amendment and further consideration of this application are solicited to place the application in condition for immediate allowance.

As an initial matter, Applicant notes an inconsistency in the Office Action. The Summary page of the Office Action mailed January 26, 2005 indicates that claims 20-24 are rejected. However, the Detailed Action section on page 2 (at item 2) of the Action indicates that "**Claims 20-23 are rejected...**". Further, on page 3 (at item 3), the Action indicates that "Claims 18, 19, and 24-32 are allowed." Accordingly, Applicant's response to the Office Action mailed January 26, 2005 is based upon the understanding that claims 20-23 stand rejected, and that claim 24 is allowed.

Claims 18-32 were pending in this application. By this Response, Applicant has cancelled rejected claims 20-23, without prejudice or disclaimer, in order to obtain allowance of the application. Applicant acknowledges with appreciation the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 18, 19 and 24-32 which now remain as pending in the subject application.

REJECTION

Claims 20-23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,140,256 to Ushikawa. This rejection is made moot by the cancellation of claims 20-23.

CONCLUSION

Applicant respectfully submits that this Amendment and the above Remarks obviate the sole outstanding rejection in this case, thereby placing the application in condition for immediate allowance. Accordingly, allowance of this application is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

By : 

Michael A. Makuch, Reg. No. 32,263
SMITH, GAMBRELL & RUSSELL, L.L.P.
1850 M Street, N.W., Suite 800
Washington, D.C. 20036
Telephone: 202 263 4300
Facsimile : 202 263 4329

April 19, 2005

231881